

From: mlnewcomb@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Megan Newcomb](#)
To: [Sam Owen](#)
Subject: Statement on the Eklutna River Draft Fish and Wildlife Program
Date: Sunday, February 18, 2024 8:26:29 AM

Dear Owners of The Eklutna Hydroelectric Project,

This comment is in regard to the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project's Draft Fish and Wildlife Program for the Eklutna River. I do not believe the plan's proposal to utilize the existing Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) water supply infrastructure meets the needs of salmon, the vision of the Eklutna Peoples, or your legal obligation to mitigate the project's impact on fish and wildlife. I support the Native Village of Eklutna's vision for river restoration and ask you to consider dam removal to fully reconnect the river and return the water flows needed to support the river's fisheries.

The current proposal leaves a mile of the river dry, releases only 3% of historical flows, and does not provide fish passage into the lake and upstream habitat. Salmon populations will only recover with a reliable and consistent water supply and access to crucial upstream spawning and rearing areas. This proposal is unacceptable and needs to go further to restore the river's salmon runs.

The Native Village of Eklutna has communicated its vision for thriving wild salmon in the Eklutna River; dam removal is the most effective way to achieve this important goal. I understand the reliance on this hydroelectric energy source in the near term. But removing the Eklutna Lake dam within the next decade, when replacement renewable energy is expected to be available, is reasonable.

Now is your one chance to make this right. Please consider removing the Eklutna Dam so that all five species of salmon can once again return to the river.

This is an ecosystem that has been struggling to thrive. Not only will you bring back salmon, but many other species will come to the area once water returns. The land will flourish again, as it should. It is our responsibility to make sure this land stays bountiful. There is so much we can learn from the local community of Eklutna and other Indigenous Peoples of Alaska.

This can also bring opportunities for jobs/research in new options of electricity production that better suits the needs of this region!

Sincerely,
Megan Newcomb
19715 Pribilof Loop Eagle River, AK 99577-8700
mlnewcomb@alaska.edu